



**Natural Resources  
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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Conservation Innovation Grant Proposals due Jan. 9

**STILLWATER, Okla., Nov. 16, 2016**—USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is seeking new proposals for cutting-edge projects that will provide new conservation opportunities through its competitive Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program. Proposals are due by Jan. 9, 2017, and final CIG funding is subject to fiscal year 2017 funding actions. Potential applicants should review the [announcement](#) for program funding that is available on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). American Indian tribes, state and local units of government, non-governmental organizations and individuals are eligible to submit proposals.

“Given the creativity and variety we’ve seen in previous CIG proposals from Oklahoma, we look forward to seeing what Oklahoma comes up with next,” said Gary O’Neill, NRCS State Conservationist for Oklahoma.

Past CIG projects in Oklahoma have included exploration of new methods to control eastern red cedar infestation, promotion of sensor based technology to improve land and water resource conservation and trials to determine the benefits of cover crops for stocker cattle operations. Diverse groups such as the InterTribal Buffalo Council, the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Inc. have all participated in CIG projects in Oklahoma.

CIG is authorized and funded under the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) and fosters innovative conservation projects that accelerate the transfer and adoption of promising technologies that benefit natural resources, agricultural production and forest management. The 2017 focus areas for project proposals include the following:

- Innovative approaches that benefit historically underserved and veteran farmers and ranchers, beginning farmers and ranchers and those with limited resources;
- Natural resources data analytics tools—such as software and mobile apps—that increase producer knowledge of conservation benefits and alternatives;
- Precision conservation tools that uncover opportunities for better input management (for example, nutrient management addressing source, timing, rate and placement), or address in-field vulnerabilities;
- Conservation finance approaches that demonstrate the potential for new investment strategies to accelerate and expand private lands conservation;

- Demonstration, evaluation and quantification of the effects of water management and soil health practices to minimize off-site impacts of natural resource challenges, such as excess sediment and nutrient runoff;
- Pay-for-success models that stimulate conservation adoption and achievement of measurable outcomes.

More information on the CIG program, including a link to application materials and submission procedures, can be found on the NRCS [CIG website](#).

Since 2009, USDA has invested nearly \$173 million to fund nearly 414 national CIG projects. USDA is continuing its commitment to increasing assistance to historically underserved and military veteran farmers and ranchers and the organizations that include and support them. Up to \$2 million of this year's funding has been set aside for projects that target these stakeholders.

CIG is part of the more than \$29 billion USDA has invested since 2009 to help producers make conservation improvements, working with as many as 500,000 farmers, ranchers and landowners to protect more than 400 million acres nationwide, boosting soil and air quality, cleaning and conserving water and enhancing wildlife habitat. For an interactive look at USDA's work in conservation and forestry over the course of this Administration, visit [Caring for our Land, Air and Water: Preserving Precious Natural Resources for Tomorrow](#).

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